

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-04 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05

INT-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-02 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 /078 W

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R 251610Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 342

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 2115

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG NI SL

SUBJECT: CONFUSION OVER NIGERIAN OIL POLICY TOWARD SIERRA  
LEONE

REF: LAGOS 9141#

1. UNDER BANNER HEADLINES READING, FOR EXAMPLE, "NIGERIA'S  
GOOD NEWS FOR AFRICA" FREETOWN PRESS REPORTED SEPT 13  
THAT NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SIERRA LEONE TANKO  
YUSUF HAD TOLD PRESS CONFERENCE PREVIOUS DAY THAT NIGERIA  
WOULD SELL OIL AT REDUCED RATES TO ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES.  
TEXT OF YUSUF'S PREPARED REMARKS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED BY  
HIGH COMMISSION DID NOT MENTION OIL AT ALL, HOWEVER, AND  
CONSISTED OF GENERAL STATEMENT OF NIGERIAN VIEWS ON AFRICAN  
UNITY. EMBASSY ATTEMPTED AT TIME TO DRAW OUT HIGH COMMISSION  
OFFICERS ON REPORTED STATEMENT ON OIL POLICY BUT NIGERIANS  
WERE HIGHLY EVASIVE AND ONLY COMMENT OBTAINABLE WAS THAT  
STATEMENT REPRESENTED PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED POLICY AND  
WAS NOT NEW.

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2. ACCORDING SENIOR GOSL FINANCE MINISTRY SOURCE, GOSL HAS BEEN TRYING COMPLETELY UNSUCCESSFULLY TO SMOKE NIGERIANS OUT ON PROSPECTS FOR CONCESSIONAL OIL SALES. SOURCE INDICATED THAT IN ADDITION TWO VISITS TO LAGOS ABOUT A YEAR AGO BY HIGH OFFICIALS, INCLUDING VP/PRIMIN KOROMA, GOSL TRYING OBTAIN AGREEMENT FROM NIGERIANS TO RECEIVE ANOTHER GOSL DELEGATION TO DISCUSS OIL. SOURCE STATED THAT THERE WAS "SOME LITTLE PROSPECT" THAT GROUP MIGHT GO TO LAGOS EARLY DECEMBER BUT EXPRESSED DEEP PERSONAL DOUBTS THAT SUCH A VISIT WOULD COME OFF.

3. NIGERIAN NON-PERFORMANCE ON CONCESSIONAL OIL SALES TO OTHER AFRICAN STATES, AND PARTICULARLY ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICAN STATES (MOST PARTICULARLY SL ITSELF) HAS BEEN WIDELY NOTED HERE AND MADE SUBJECT OF MANY WRY COMMENTS. DURING EXCHANGE OF TOASTS ON NIGERIAN NATIONAL DAY OCT 1, VP/PRIMIN KOROMA DOUBLED UP HUGE RECEPTION WITH LAUGHTER BY DELIBERATELY AMENDING NORMAL TOAST TO "PROSPERITY" OF NIGERIA WITH COMMENT THAT THIS UNNECESSARY BECAUSE NIGERIA ALREADY PROSPEROUS ENOUGH AND IT HOPED NIGERIA WOULD SHARE SOME OF THAT PROSPERITY WITH SIERRA LEONE. GOSL CONCERN WITH FINANCIAL DRAIN OF HIGH OIL COSTS ALSO UNDERLINED, INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, IN PRESS REPORTS KOROMA'S REMARKS OCT 22 TO DEPARTING EAST GERMAN AMBASSADOR (RESIDENT CONAKRY) IN WHICH KOROMA APPEALED TO GDR TO JOIN SL IN FIGHT AGAINST "APPARENTLY PERPETUAL SUPPRESSION...AS RESULT OF ACTIONS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND OIL PRODUCING NATIONS ALIKE."

4. COMMENT: EMBARRASSMENT OF NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSION OFFICERS AT EMBASSY PROBES FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF YUSUF'S "GOOD NEWS" STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT THE EBULLIENT YUSUF GOT TOO FAR OFF BASE IN WHAT WAS APPARENTLY OFF-THE-CUFF RESPONSE TO REPORTER'S QUESTION.  
OLSON

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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